



March 2020

# Island County Parent to Parent Newsletter

INFORMATION, RESOURCES & SUPPORT FOR SPECIAL  
NEEDS FAMILIES IN ISLAND COUNTY

All Ages  
All Abilities

## Spring Fling Dance Party



**Dancing, Arts & Crafts, Potluck and  
Free Family Fun!**

**Saturday, April 4th Noon-2pm**

**Coupeville Rec Hall**

**901 NW Alexander St, Coupeville**

Just a nice time to get together to meet some new families in our community, reconnect with others you've met at events, set up play dates, let your kids be themselves. Great networking opportunity.



For more information, contact Parent to Parent:  
Tiffany Wheeler-Thompson (360)632-7539 Call/Text

Parent to Parent offers support and resources for special needs families in our community

## "Happy Down Syndrome Day" Dinner

Saturday, March 21st

5:00Pm to whenever

El Cazador 32195 WA-20, Oak Harbor



Bring the family and meet others rocking an extra chromosome on the island. We have a large age range on the island of people with Down syndrome. Get to know others in different parts of their path.

Please **RSVP** so we know we have enough space. We look forward to meeting new families and catching up with others that have participated in Parent to Parent events along the way.

Call/text Tiffany to **RSVP** (360)632-7539. Name and # of people in your party. No-Host Event (pay-your-own-way meal)

## "Celebrate Autism Day" Dinner

Thursday, April 2nd

6:00pm to whenever

El Cazador 32195 WA-20, Oak Harbor

Enjoy a meal with others that are on a similar journey. Great way to connect, set up playdates, ask questions, or just enjoy dinner with others that "get it".



Please **RSVP** so we know we have enough space. We look forward to meeting new families and catching up with others that have participated in Parent to Parent events along the way.

Call/text Tiffany to **RSVP** (360)632-7539. Name and # of people in your party. No-Host Event (pay-your-own-way meal)



## Spring Break Bowling Party

Wednesday, April 8th 3-5pm Oak Bowl, Oak Harbor

All Ages, All Abilities. Bumper bowling fun.

\$2.25 per game (usually 2), \$2.50 shoe rental. To RSVP call/text (360)632-7539.

## Spring Sports are Just Around the Corner



- Special Olympics (Ages 8 & Up)

Oak Harbor offers Cycling, Track, and Swimming beginning in March. For more info contact Chris (360)320-2549 or wispecialolympics@gmail.com

- Challenger Division Baseball (Ages 4-18)



Registration now open until March 15th. T-Ball rules, great for beginners or those that need a little extra support on and off the field. Commitment is one hour a week for practice and a couple of games through the season. Schedule not set yet. My daughter has been on the team since it started. Call me (Tiffany) if you have questions or reach out to coach Jason aidynsdad@yahoo.com \$110. To find out more, check out North Whidbey Little League website

[www.northwhidbeylittleleague.org/](http://www.northwhidbeylittleleague.org/)

# Shout Out to the Siblings of Special Needs Children

My eleven year old daughter memorized her brother's daily medication regimen. Not because she was asked to, or because she needed to, but because she decided she wanted to, "just in case." She is two years younger than him, but has played the role of big sister to him for as far back as she can remember.

When she started kindergarten, she came home from school one day and told me that her brother could be heard screaming (as he does when he is excited) in her classroom from down the hall. Her classmates laughed. She told me she raised her hand and told the class that was her brother. I will never forget her little voice saying, "and no one laughed anymore."

My son, who is now ten, told me a similar story during his kindergarten year. His class passed his brother's class in the hall, and a friend made the comment that his brother looked funny. With the most serious face, he told me, "I told him, hey! That's my brother and he has eps-ilepsy!" The friend stopped teasing.

Through their compassion for their brother, they taught their peers to treat him with dignity and compassion as well. By the time my oldest son was in the fifth grade, and his younger siblings were in the first and second, they had developed a routine. My daughter shared a lunch period with him and would always visit him, hug him, and get to know his classmates. When she or my youngest son saw their big brother during recess, they would take turns with their friends pushing him on the swing. Their classmates got to know him as well. The same kids that had laughed at him, simply because they had never known anyone like him, were waiting their turn to make him giggle on the swings.

These are my children's stories, but they are also the stories of the siblings of special needs children everywhere. They are the children who have seen some of life's hardest and most unfair circumstances at young ages. They have sat in waiting rooms of doctors' offices time and time again. They have been away from their parents for days at a time during their siblings' hospitalizations. They know seizure first aid, or CPR, or how to feed through a tube. They want to know those things. These are the

children who sometimes feel they live in the shadows, who sometimes crave the attention of their parents that seems so unevenly distributed at times. These are the children who sometimes have to miss birthday parties or other fun events when their sibling is ill.



I'll never forget the night I found my youngest son, maybe seven at the time, walking out of my room, where his brother sleeps. "I was just checking on Matias," he said, and went on his way as if it was the most natural thing in the world. Another time, he and his sister had a very serious conversation about who would take care of Matias when I'm no longer able to. They both wanted to be the one who would take care of him. They ultimately decided they would share him. I've

never asked them about this, but still these are the things these children consider before they have even seen their teenage years.

These children, who could be bitter and angry and have every right, instead choose compassion, understanding, and unconditional love. They are incredible individuals who are helping change the way the world views people with special needs, and perhaps one of the most important influences on how their peers will treat those with disabilities. I hope they know that they are never in the shadows, because their light shines too bright to be masked by darkness.

<https://www.mombieneedscoffee.com/shout-out-to-the-siblings-of-special-needs-children.html?fbclid=IwAR0hjhhQ4Bpoflqm0rhHIXnPQrso8pOKUxKJtBYf-PAw3Eysh3amwElk3Cs>





# Disability Discounted Fare for Washington State Ferries

Welcome to Washington State Ferries. It is the policy of WSF sellers to verify proper credentials prior to the selling of discounted fares.

Because WSF receives federal grants for capital construction projects, WSF must satisfy the federal requirement of offering people with disabilities and seniors a reduced fare. In order to receive the funding, these fares are to be collected and reported as two distinct fare types, and not as a collective generic “discounted ticket”.



## What is an Example of a Credential Establishing a Disability?

Examples of acceptable credentials establishing eligibility for the disabled fare include, but are not limited to:\*

- ⇒ The WSF Disability Travel Permit (with or without an “attendant care” endorsement)
- ⇒ Regional Reduced Fare Permit (RRFP)
- ⇒ Seattle Flash Card
- ⇒ The card that is issued with Accessible Parking Placards—(**NOT the placard itself**)
- ⇒ A Medicare Card
- ⇒ A Visible Disability
- ⇒ Or any Regional Transit ADA Identification that specifies the holder of the card as a person with a disability.

Many people who ride the ferries are not from Washington State and may not have a credential that is familiar with the WSF staff—this does not mean that it cannot be valid for ID. As long as your credential **clearly establishes that you have a disability**, WSF ticket sellers will honor it in accordance with our tariff. A WSF employee should never require as to a customer’s disability. WSF passengers with an Attendant Care endorsement on their WSF Disability Travel Permit or RRFP card are entitled to have their attendant travel free of charge. \*Veteran’s Administration ID Cards are not accepted as a credential establishing disability.

### **Questions??? For more information on the WSF Ferry Disability Travel Permit, Please Call:**

(206)515-3464 (888)808-7977 (Washington only)

ADA Contact Information: (206) 464-6400 General Information

ADA Accessibility Coordinator (206)515-3437

<https://www.wsdot.wa.gov/ferries/pdf/WashingtonStateFerries-DisabilityDiscountedFaresInfo.pdf>

## Washington State Parks Disability Pass

Washington State Parks offers passes that reduce or waive camping, moorage, watercraft launch fees and day use for limited income senior citizens, disabled veterans, foster parents and people with disabilities. Qualified individuals may apply for more than one type of pass, although only one pass may be used at a time. These passes are valid only at Washington state parks.



50 percent discount on nightly camping and moor- age fees. You also receive free day-use access, water- craft launching and trailer dump use. Pass valid year round. Exemption: Disability placards or license plates. The Department of Licensing issues Washington state disability permits and license plates, and holders of these are exempt from needing the Discover Pass on State Parks lands. Holders of these permits and plates will need the Discover Pass to access lands managed by WDFW and DNR To apply or more information: <https://parks.state.wa.us/205/Passes>

**Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife Disability Pass:** Whether fishing, hunting, or just getting outside for the weekend, the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife helps thousands make the most of this amazing state every year. Having WDFW disability status will provide access to programs, services activities, lands and facilities. "Person with a disability" means a person who has a permanent physical disability or permanent developmental disability which substantially impairs their ability to participate in recreational activities or access department lands.



<https://wdfw.wa.gov/accessibility/eligibility-requirements-disability-status>

## Support/Social/Advocacy Groups

**Coffee & Conversations-Parent to Parent** Tiffany Call/Text (360)632-7539 North: Whidbey Coffee (Near Wendy's) 1st Wednesday of the Month 11am-Noon South: Bayview Flower House Café (Langley) 1st Friday of the Month 10am-11am

**Whidbey Functioning Autism Social Group WFASG** Tim and Evelyn (360)221-7785 Group that meets for resources, support and social events for families with high functioning Autism and Aspergers, teens to adults.

**NAS Whidbey Island: Exceptional Family Member Program EFMP** Sheryl Prout (360)527-5266 Resource, information and support group for military families

**Padre Apoyando Motivando Informando PAMI** Laiza Ramos (787)529-6788 Spanish Support Group. Meets 1st Tuesday of the month. Location: Aptitude Habilitation Services. Childcare offered with RSVP. [pamiespanol@gmail.com](mailto:pamiespanol@gmail.com)

**People First of Washington:** Chris (360)720-4918 Support and advocacy for adults with disabilities that meets monthly for support, advocacy skills and social events in Oak Harbor. 2nd Wednesday of the Month.

**Heritage Adventurers** (360)321-5748 A friendship group for adults 18 and over that meets for outings and events. Various disabilities and different ways of learning make it a fun group.

**Washington Father's Network:** <https://fathersnetwork.org/> Mike Etzell (360)678-7883 Information, events and resources for fathers raising a special needs child.

**Flying Fingers Deaf & Hard of Hearing Social** Sue (360)221-0383 Langley They meet the 1st Friday of the Month.

**Family Caregivers Support Program** Coupeville (360)678-4886, SW (360)321-1600, OH (360)675-0311, Camano (360)678-4886

**\*\*Most of these groups have active Facebook Pages as well. Island County Parent to Parent, PAMI Island Senior Services and WA Father's Network. Great resources, information and support offered on these pages.**



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(360)632-7539 (Voicemail or Text)  
t.wheeler-thompson@islandcountywa.gov  
[Island County Special Needs Resource Guide](https://www.islandcountywa.gov/Humanservices/Pages/Parent-to-Parent.aspx)  
<https://www.islandcountywa.gov/Humanservices/Pages/Parent-to-Parent.aspx>

## Night to Remember Prom

### Saturday, May 2nd

Details are still being worked out, but I wanted you to know the date to **MARK YOUR CALENDAR!**



Special Needs Prom for ages 14 & up. Great opportunity to get dressed up, dance with friends and have a Night to Remember! Become a Queen or King for the day!

Details and Registration information to follow soon.

## Upcoming Statewide Conference/Events Mark Your Calendar and Register!

- ⇒ **Infant and Early Childhood Conference** in Tacoma—May 6-8. Offers over 100 high quality trainings related to early childhood education with a focus on birth to three and early intervention. For more information, contact Toddler Learning Center (360)679-1039
- ⇒ **Community Summit** in Wenatchee June 9-11. Statewide conference for teens, adults and their families searching for resources and programs available for transition into and through adulthood. Students 14-21 and their parents are highest priority for county support to attend. Contact Mike Etzell (360)678-7883 [mikeet@islandcountywa.gov](mailto:mikeet@islandcountywa.gov)
- ⇒ **Washington State Father's Network Campout and BBQ**—Father's Day Weekend June 19-21. Washington Park in Anacortes. Campout for the weekend or just come for the BBQ on Saturday the 20th. Meet families from all over the state, going on over 35 years and keeps getting better. Bring the whole family. For more information contact Mike Etzell (360)678-7883 [mikeet@islandcountywa.gov](mailto:mikeet@islandcountywa.gov)

### Want to be a part of the solution?

Join the Accessible Communities Committee.

We identify barriers that people with disabilities experience in our community. The committees address those needs with projects to obtain accessibility for everyone. Physical, mental health, at-risk, veterans, cognitive, etc. Our community needs to be accessible to all.

We are seeking self-advocates and family members, as well as providers to be a part of these committees. One committee on Whidbey Island and one on Camano Island. The commit-

tees are a sub-set of the Governor's Committee on Disability Issues and Employment. Collaboration is key.

Questions or want more details, contact Tiffany Wheeler-Thompson, facilitator for Island County. Check out the Governor's website for more details.

<https://accessiblecommunities.wa.gov/>

Projects approved for Island County & funded by the Governor's committee to date:

- Bus Stop Seats for those that can't stand long.
- Mental/Behavior Health Resource Guide for First Responders